

AB 1732

Equal Restroom Access

Assemblymember
Phil Ting
19TH DISTRICT



SUMMARY

Restricting access to single-occupancy restrooms by gender creates problems of safety, fairness, and convenience. We must change our focus from segregating access to equalizing access to this solitary room. This will enable everyone to get in and out on the same terms.

AB 1732 would enact the nation's most progressive restroom access policy among the states, requiring all single-occupancy restrooms in businesses, government buildings and places of public accommodation to be available to everyone. Compliance with the bill is a matter of changing a sign on a restroom door.

BACKGROUND

Everyone can benefit from expanded access to single-occupancy restrooms - the status quo simply presents unnecessary problems for too many people. AB 1732 will help resolve the following issues.

Safety

A 2013 survey and report published by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law found that gender-specific restrooms pose serious risks to transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. Due to bias and discrimination, 70% of survey respondents had reported being verbally harassed, denied access, or physically assaulted in public restrooms.

Fairness

Many of our older buildings were designed and built with inadequate restroom facilities for women. Newer buildings often do not have the capacity they need to accommodate women efficiently either. This results in women being forced to wait or postpone having their needs met while a men's single-occupancy restroom is available.

Convenience

Universal single-occupancy restroom access would also make life easier for parents of differently-gendered children. The same holds true for people living with disabilities who rely on caretakers of a different gender.

When out in public, these groups often have no choice but to break a social norm when the only available restroom is designated to a specific gender.

Unrestricted restroom access is not a novel concept. Restrooms in homes and airplanes, for example, are not gender-specific. The same goes for portable restrooms.

The value of equal access to single-occupancy restrooms is increasingly being recognized. In 2015, the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) named gender-neutral single-occupancy restrooms as a best practice in the workplace. A number of cities across the country have passed ordinances requiring the practice. In California, such ordinances are active in Berkeley, Cathedral City, and West Hollywood. Furthermore, the University of California has had a gender-neutral single-occupancy restroom policy since 2014.

THIS BILL

AB 1732 eliminates the fears and frustration that many people experience in restrooms on a daily basis. Specifically, the bill would require all single-occupancy restrooms (rooms with a toilet and/or urinal and sink) in businesses, government buildings and locations otherwise dedicated for public use to be designated as "all gender." A health inspection official would be authorized to check for compliance with this law during a health inspection.

SUPPORT

California NOW
Equality California
Golden Gate Restaurant Association
Transgender Law Center

STAFF CONTACT

Office of Assemblymember Phil Ting
Anthony Matthews
(916) 319-2019